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ABSTRACT

A random sample of 100 students who had participated in the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) at DeKalb Community College (Georgia) was compared with 100 non-CLEP students on factors of Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, grade point average, academic units earned, and age. CLEP students averaged a SAT verbal score of 560 and 490 on math compared to 410 in each area for non-CLEP students. A grade point average (GPA) of 3.5 and 53 quarter units were earned by the CLEP group, while non-CLEP subjects averaged a 2.7 GPA and 45 units. The CLEP group averaged 29 years of age compared with 22 years for non-CLEP students. All differences were statistically significant. (RT)

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CLEP Students compared to Non-CLEP Students in the Community College

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JC 780 135

CLEP Students compared to Non-CLEP Students in the Community College

This study compared the characteristics of 100 CLEP students with the characteristics of 100 non-CLEP students in the community college. Significant differences were found between the two groups of students on variables such as Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, grade point average, hours earned, and age level. CLEP students were found to excel in all variables studied.

CLEP Students compared to Non-CLEP Students in the Community College

For many years, colleges and universities have allowed advanced placement in college courses by using departmental examinations. Research concerning the subsequent progress for those students who were placed in advanced courses was limited in scope partially because researchers were unable to establish control groups. A similar situation has existed with the research related to college credit by examination using the College Level Examination Program (CLEP). Most of the studies about CLEP have been descriptive because the nature of the programs have not allowed a more in depth analysis of the data. However, the present study does provide a comparison.

Critics of the CLEP trend felt that the credit was a give-away program and that traditional academic standards would suffer because of the credit. McClusky (1974) found that the mean cumulative grade point average of students who earned credit through CLEP was higher than those students who tried CLEP but received no credit. Another finding of McClusky (1974) was that students who earned credit through CLEP made higher grades than the other students. Initially, there was much skepticism from college faculties that the students who received CLEP credit for the first course in a sequence would do poorly in a later course in sequence; as a result of the skepticism, many studies were conducted to investigate the performance of CLEP students in sequence courses after the credit by examination. Several

studies (Barrett, 1976; Grandy and Shea, 1975; McClusky, 1974; Ozaki, 1974 Stewart, 1973) showed that the CLEP students performed academically as well or better than the non-CLEP students performed in sequence courses.

The ages of CLEP students were significant in several studies. Barrett (1976) in a doctoral study discovered that 69 percent of the CLEP students in eleven Tennessee colleges were 18 years of age or less. Fagin (1971) found that chronological age had no bearing on the ability of mature women to perform on CLEP examinations in English, social science, and science.

In a study at the University of Iowa, Enger and Whitney (1974) found that freshmen who earned CLEP credit had higher ACT scores than freshmen who did not earn CLEP credit. Another finding of the study was that students with CLEP credit tended to graduate earlier and at a higher rate than non-CLEP students.

The purpose of the present study was to determine whether significant differences occurred between CLEP and non-CLEP students at DeKalb Community College on measures such as Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, grade point average, quarter hours earned, and age. DeKalb Community College is located in the metropolitan Atlanta area and is the largest community college in Georgia.

1. There will be no significant difference between CLEP and non-CLEP students in terms of Scholastic Aptitude Test scores.

2. There will be no significant difference between CLEP and non-CLEP students in terms of cumulative grade point average.
3. There will be no significant difference between CLEP and non-CLEP students in terms of total academic hours earned.
4. There will be no significant difference between CLEP and non-CLEP students in terms of chronological age.

METHOD

During the winter quarter, 1977, a random sample of 100 CLEP students and 100 non-CLEP students from DeKalb Community College were selected for the study. The CLEP students had earned CLEP credits granted for the achievement of the 50th percentile scores. The non-CLEP students were the regular college students who had not attempted the CLEP tests. Academic records for the students selected in the study were obtained from the records office. The data was gathered from the records, and a questionnaire administered to the students. A t test was used to determine whether significant differences existed between the groups of students.

RESULTS

Comparisons of the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, grade point average, academic hours earned, and ages between the CLEP and non-CLEP students are shown in Table 1. For the verbal and mathematics portions of the Scholastic Aptitude Test, the CLEP students scored higher than the non-CLEP students scored. The value of t was 12.2 for the verbal portion, and was 11.9 for

TABLE 1

CLEP Students Compared to Non-CLEP Students on Selected Variables

Measures	CLEP Students		Non-CLEP Students		
	M	SD	M	SD	5
SAT-Verbal	560	78.0	410	92.0	12.2**
SAT-Math	490	73.0	410	90.0	11.9**
Cumulative G.P.A	3.5	.21	2.7	.75	2.66**
Quarter hours earned	53.0	26.0	45.0	29.0	1.95*
Chronological age(yrs.)	29.0	9.6	22.0	4.8	7.0**

*Difference significant at .05 level

**Difference significant at .01 level

the mathematics portion. Both values of t were significant at the .01 level; therefore, the null hypothesis about Scholastic Aptitude Test scores was rejected.

In comparing the cumulative grade point average between the CLEP and non-CLEP students, it was found that the value of t was 2.66 which was significant at the .01 level. The null hypothesis about grade point average was rejected.

The third variable considered was the total academic hours earned by both groups of students. Although the apparent difference in total academic hours earned was small, the value of t was 1.95 which was significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was accepted at .01 level, but rejected at the .05 level.

Comparing chronological ages of the two groups of students was the last variable studied. Because the computed value of t was 7.0 which was significant at the .01 level, the null hypothesis about age was rejected.

DISCUSSION

The present study showed that significant differences exist between CLEP and non-CLEP students on the following variables: Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, verbal and mathematics, cumulative grade point average, total academic hours earned, and chronological ages.

The results agree with the findings of McClusky (1974) who found that CLEP students made higher grades than non-CLEP students made. It is apparent that CLEP students make higher

test scores as well as college grades than do the non- CLEP students.

Concerning the ages of CLEP students, Barrett (1976) found that 69% of the CLEP students in Tennessee colleges were 18 years of age or less. This was in conflict with the present study which found that the average age of the CLEP student was 29 years. Community college students tend to be older than residential students so the difference in age may be due to the residence of the student.

Significantly high Scholastic Aptitude Test scores of the CLEP students compared to the non-CLEP students agreed with the findings of Enger and Whitney (1974) who found that CLEP students at the University of Iowa had higher ACT scores than did the non-CLEP students.

The following conclusions were made in comparing CLEP students to non-CLEP students in community college:

1. The CLEP students have higher Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, verbal and mathematics than the non-CLEP students have.
2. The CLEP students have a higher cumulative grade point average than the non-CLEP students have.
3. The CLEP students earn more academic hours of credit than the non-CLEP students earn.
4. The CLEP students are older than the non-CLEP students are.

College admissions officers and counselors must be cautious in recommending the CLEP testing for all students because of the

disparity in ability and experience levels of the students in the community colleges. Simply, because an adult has lived 40-50 years does not indicate that the person can score high enough on CLEP tests to earn college credits. Using the results of the Scholastic Aptitude Test scores appears to be a more realistic indicator of success on the CLEP tests. CLEP testing is advantageous for the adult student who is above average in ability as evidenced by Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, but does not seem to provide the same opportunity for below average students or persons who have not broadened their life experiences.

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